

(Washington, DC) - Congressman Wally Herger today spoke on the House floor in strong opposition to the Democratic procedural maneuver to effectively kill the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement. His remarks are below and can be watched [here](#) :

Mr. Speaker, if this procedural vote is successful, Congress would be rebuffing the Colombia agreement through technical gimmicks and rejecting a level playing field for American workers. Colombian workers and producers already have free access to the U.S. market, but we don't have reciprocity. Our manufacturers and farmers need this agreement to sell their product, create jobs, and compete against foreign producers. Today's vote stymies Congressional action on an agreement that will spur job creation and economic growth for U.S. workers and their families. A vote for this rule is a vote against American workers, period.

Since the agreement was signed nearly 500 days ago, Congressional Republicans and the White House have tried to work with the Democratic Majority to approve this agreement. We reached a bipartisan consensus nearly a year ago to ensure Congressional consideration of this agreement. In sending up the agreement, the President said that he was open to continuing discussions with Democrats. The Democratic Leadership, through this rule, has firmly shut the door to any discussions.

Members should be keenly aware of the very negative foreign policy ramifications of this vote. Several foreign leaders in the region, 31 U.S. Ambassadors to Latin America, and over 40 respected leaders of the Democratic Party have emphasized the importance of this agreement in supporting expanded democracy and development in the region.

This rule would be cheered by belligerent leftist guerillas abetted by Venezuelan strongman Hugo Chavez who seek to undermine the democratically-elected Colombian government, with menacing ramifications. This rule is a public slap in Colombia's face, a loyal ally at the epicenter of a philosophical war between democracy and totalitarianism, capitalism and socialism. Colombian President Uribe made it very clear that the best way to support Colombia's struggle for economic and political security is to pass the agreement. Today's action would trounce that plea and embolden the foes of democracy in Latin America. I urge Members to oppose this rule and give the agreement the fair up-or-down vote it deserves.